

IN THE
BEGINNING
WAS THE...
WORD
A STUDY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

LESSON 12 – The Word is...UNIFIED WITH FATHER AND
SPIRIT IN THEIR WORK OF REVELATION AND REDEMPTION

FACILITATOR'S Note

MAIN POINT THIS WEEK: Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work (14:17–18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21–22).

This week we will focus our time on how the Trinity is united in its work, yet different in roles and relationships. Again, people struggle with this concept and it continues to be sticky point for many people to claim Jesus as Lord. The Gospel of John provides for us a unique and in-depth perspective on the work and functions of the Trinity that has largely influenced our views and theology of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Spend time going through these passages and the depths of what they mean. While each part of the Trinity is equal in essence, they are not in role and function. That does not mean that one has greater value than the other, but they each serve a purpose in the work, will, and purpose of God. Dig in and enjoy!

Remember, this semester we hope to provide material that will provide knowledge (HEAD); then ask questions that will bring us understanding (HEART); and then motivate participants to go and live the Word in the world and demonstrate Godly wisdom (HANDS). Help them with that today.

HEAD → HEART → HANDS

As always, we would encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by digging into the Word and specifically the text for each of the weeks. **This week the texts are: 14:17–18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21–22.** As you move through the Word, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is then that you should approach this lesson plan and use it (and others) only as a guide for the weeks to come. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

PRAYER

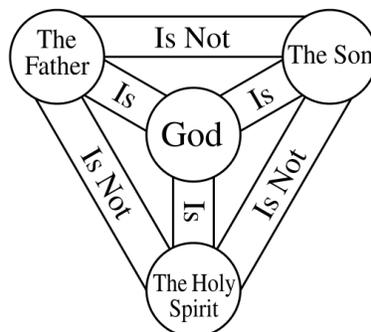
Begin your time with a prayer asking God for the guidance of His Holy Spirit as you and your class seek to encounter Him through His Holy Word.

FOCUS

- Understand that the Father, Son, and Spirit are united in will and purpose.
- Understand that the Father, Son, and Spirit have different roles and relationship.
- Understand that God is ONE in essence and THREE in persons, but this does not change the oneness/unity of God and His purpose and will for humankind.

DISCUSSION STARTERS (OPTIONAL)

- TRINITY: The word Trinity does not occur in the Bible. Yet it is something that essential to Christian belief. The first use of the word is credited to Tertullian (a Latin theologian who wrote in the early 3rd century) to explain the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one in essence, but three in person. Draw (or give copies) the “Shield of the Trinity” and discuss its meaning together:



KNOWLEDGE HEAD

Some Brief Theology Concerning the Trinity. The Christian concept of the Trinity affirms that one God eternally exists and is fully expressed in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead is equally God, eternally God, and fully God. Each person of the Trinity is equal in essence to the other divine persons. Therefore, each possesses fully the eternal divine nature. Yet, each is a distinct personal expression of the one and undivided divine nature. Simply stated: God is **ONE** in *essence* and **THREE** in *persons*. Instead of thinking of it in a mathematical term like $1+1+1=3$, you must think $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$.

The question is, what distinguishes the persons of the Trinity if they are ONE as God yet THREE as persons? There are two things that distinguish the persons of the Trinity: 1) **Role**, and 2) **Relationship**. Each member of the Trinity has a distinct **Role** they play in the work of God and each has a distinct **Relationship** with the other persons in the Trinity. The following is a simple way in which to view the distinguishing **Roles** and **Relationships** within the Trinity:

Person	Role	Relationship
Father	He is responsible for devising the purposes and plans (according to His will) that take place throughout all of creation and through the story of redemption. (Eph. 1:3-4, 9-11)	The Father is supreme in authority among the persons of the Trinity.
Son	Always seeks to do the Father's will and seeks to glorify the Father in all that He does. (John 8:28-29, 42)	The Son is under the Father's authority. Although the Son is fully God, He takes His lead from the Father.
Spirit	The Spirit seeks to lead people to the Son and glorify the Son to the ultimate praise of the Father. (John 16:14; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11)	The Spirit is under the authority of both the Father and the Son.

Now let's see how this theology is played out in the Gospel of John...

From the Gospel of John

- **14:16-17, 23, 26 (READ 14:15-31)**
 - Key Points
 - In these verses we see the roles of the Trinity played out.
 - Vv. 16-17 demonstrate that Jesus asks for the Father's permission to give us a Helper (the Holy Spirit or Spirit of Truth). He must have the authority to do so given to Him by the power of the Father. This can only be done so if it is by the Father's will and purpose and according to His plan.

- Jesus will then, by the authority given Him, send or command the Holy Spirit (BOTH [because they are ONE] the Father's and Jesus' Spirit – see Romans 8:9) to indwell the disciples so that He can lead them to the truth: JESUS (“I am the way, and the TRUTH, and the life” - 14:6).
- The Spirit will indwell believers forever and will function as Jesus “emissary” during His physical absence. The promise of the Spirit is the promise of God's divine presence in His children and includes not only the Spirit (14:15-17), but the Son (14:18-21), and the Father (14:22-24).
 - It is important to note here that this does not mean the Spirit of God was not working and active with individuals prior to this. Instead, this is an indwelling that will take place. While the Spirit was with and worked through people prior to this, He did not take up residence in the hearts of men.
 - This was in fulfillment of the promise made back in Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:26-29. God, with the indwelling of His Spirit in disciples, now fulfills His plan in part to bring His children back to Him to be in His presence forever. Yet, it is not completely fulfilled until the second coming of Jesus when we will join Him in His daily presence eternally.
- V. 23 highlights that the Father's word is the Son's word and that by obeying His word you obey the Father. The Father will in turn love you for your love and obedience. This love and obedience will be rewarded by the presence of God making His home in the heart of man. When looking at this in relation to v. 2, Jesus is preparing a home for us with God. Until that day when WE take up residence in the house of God, He comes and takes up residence in the home of our hearts (PRAISE GOD!).
- V. 26 speaks specifically to the work of the Spirit. He will be a Helper whom the Father sends in the name of the Son so that He (the Spirit) will teach the disciples all the things the Son has taught so they will not forget. This addresses how the Spirit will work through these individuals to readily recollect the words of Jesus so they could be taught and recorded in the Gospels and then later in the letters of the NT.
- Contemporary Application
 - The Spirit of God lives in you. How does this make you feel? Should it change anything (the way you live, act, feel, etc.)? Explain.
 - What does chapter 14 teach us about God and what He wants for us?
- **15:26**
 - Key Points
 - This verse speaks specifically to the work of the Holy Spirit as well as His place in the Trinity.
 - “The Helper” is the Holy Spirit as we saw in 14:16-17, 26. This could also be translated “Counselor” or “Advocate”. The point is that the Holy Spirit serves as God's presence in our lives as He dwells within us. He will serve as a “Helper,” “Counselor,” and “Advocate” to us throughout our lives.
 - This is in fulfillment of Jesus' promise to be with us always, till the very end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

- The Holy Spirit will point us to God the Son in order that He may bear witness to us about Jesus and that the Father and Son may be glorified as we enjoy constant fellowship with God and grow in our relationship with Him.
- Jesus points out here that He will send the Spirit (His Spirit) and the Spirit will come in power into the world in obedience to the Son. Yet, the Spirit is also coming in obedience through the direction of God the Father. So, both Father and Son work in unison to send **their** (Romans 8:9) Spirit into the world and more importantly into the hearts of humankind.
- One of the most important points to remember here is the work of the Spirit:
 - Helper
 - Counselor
 - Advocate
 - Bearing Witness about Jesus
 - Why is this important?
 - As the Spirit bears witness about Jesus to us, so also when we bear witness about Jesus to others the Spirit is doing His work silently through us and giving us the words to speak as Jesus mentions in 15:27 (see Matthew 10:19-20; Luke 12:12; Acts 4:8; 6:10; 13:9; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 13:3).
- Contemporary Application
 - How has the Spirit proven to be your “Helper,” “Counselor,” and “Advocate” in your life?
 - Do you really believe that the Spirit is guiding you and helping you?
 - Have you ever been nervous to share your faith, but when you began to speak the words came out of your mouth you know were not from you? Share your example.
 - How does it feel to know that the Holy Spirit will speak through you? Should this give us more confidence to share our faith? Why doesn’t it?
- **20:21-22**
 - Key Points
 - This passage is known as John’s “Great Commission.” It serves as the culmination of the Gospel message that Jesus was sent from the Father. The “Sent One” now becomes the “Sender” and commissions His disciples to go out and share His message.
 - All three persons of the Trinity are present and a part of this commission. Consider this:
 - The Father sends the Son
 - Jesus sends His disciples
 - Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit enables the disciples to speak the Words of God
 - Jesus breathes on the disciples in order that they may receive the Holy Spirit. This is very much like the Spirit filling the disciples at the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4.
 - In Acts 2:1-4 the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples through a mighty rushing wind (parallel this to Jesus comparing the Holy Spirit’s work to the wind [John 3:8]). The mighty rushing wind demonstrates the power of the

Holy Spirit coming on the disciples in greater force and therefore they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gives them the ability to utter the words. WOW!

- Contemporary Application
 - As “sent ones” have we allowed the Holy Spirit to speak the words of God through us, or have we stifled the Spirit and remained silent? Discuss.
 - In general, do we recognize the power of the Spirit in us, or do we ignore it and perhaps discount it?
 - Remember, the Trinity works in unison to bring about revelation and redemption. How are we working in unison with God and each other to share His revelation and redemption to the world?

If you have enough time, spend some of it looking over what the work of God is in light of the Trinity:

THE WORK OF THE TRINITY (From the ESV Study Bible)

Though the word “Trinity” does not appear in the Bible, by presenting the Father, Son, and Spirit all doing what no one else ever does, the Gospel of John gives us the raw material on which this doctrine is based. Observing what God says and does helps us to know him, and observing which actions are done by which members of the Godhead helps us to see which roles they play.

Action	Father	Son	Spirit
Give life	5:21, 26; (6:33); 17:3	5:21, 25–26, 40; 6:33; 17:3	3:6, 8; 6:63
Proclaim future	1:33	13:19, 26, 36–38; 14:3, 29; 16:1–4, 16–28, 32; 20:18	16:13
Indwell believers	14:23	14:20, 23; (15:4–7); 17:23, 26	14:17
Teach	6:45; 7:16, 17; 8:28	7:14; (8:2); 8:20; 13:13–14	14:26
Testify to Jesus	5:32, 37; 6:27; 8:18	8:12–14, 18	15:26
Glorify Jesus	5:22–23; 8:50, 54; 13:31–32; 17:1, 22	(1:14); 2:11; 13:31–32; 17:5, 24	16:14

ACTIONS COMMON TO FATHER AND SON

Action	Father	Son
Glorify the Father	4:23; 12:28; 13:31–32	(2:16); (9:3–4); 11:40; 12:28; 13:31– 32; 14:13; 17:1, 4–5
Give the Spirit	3:34; 14:16	(4:10–14); (7:37–39); 20:22
Send the Spirit	14:26	15:26; 16:7

ACTIONS COMMON TO SON AND SPIRIT

Action	Son	Spirit
Be given by the Father	3:16	(4:10–14); 14:16
Be sent by the Father	3:17; 4:34; 5:23–24, 36; 6:29, 57; 7:28–29, 33; 8:16, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44–45; 13:20; 15:21; 17:3, 8, 18, 23, 25; 20:21	14:26; 15:26

Speak not from himself	(5:19); 5:30; (6:38); 7:16; 12:49–50	16:13
Speak only what he hears	3:32; (3:34); (5:30); 8:26, 40; 12:50; 15:15	16:13
Convict	3:19–20; 4:16, 18; (5:27); (8:7); 8:34, 40; 11:40; 12:7–8; 13:8	16:7–11
Be received	1:12 (cf. 1:10–11)	7:39 (cf. 14:17)
Disclose what belongs to God	1:18	16:13–14

UNDERSTANDING HEART

- How does God, as three persons, work as One to carry out His plan of redemption?
- How does the Holy Spirit work in our lives? Do we allow Him to do His work in us?
- Is it necessary to “know all the answers” in order to share our faith with others? Explain.

WISDOM HANDS

- This week make a commitment to NOT stifle the Holy Spirit. Make an effort to identify the moments that the Spirit is opening up and opportunity for you to share your love and faith in God. In that moment, don't let it pass you by, but allow the Holy Spirit to speak through you. Have the attitude of Paul when he instructs us, “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt (the preserving of God's Word), so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (*italics mine*).” (Colossians 4:5-6)

PRAYER



End your time together with a prayer. Praise God for how He demonstrates His unity of purpose and mind within Himself, to our salvation and His glory.

CLASS OUTLINE

"...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31) The Gospel of John was written so that those who read its message may believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, THE CHRIST. The following outline holds the major themes expounded on in the Gospel of John in order that its readers may believe in Jesus and have eternal life. (Adapted from the "Key Themes" outline in the ESV Study Bible):

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (January 4)
2. THE WORD IS...
GOD (January 11)
 - a. Jesus is GOD
 - b. 1:1–2, 18; 5:17–18; 8:58–59; 10:30–33; 20:28
3. THE WORD IS...
BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD (January 18)
 - a. Jesus existed before the creation of all there is.
 - b. 1:1–2; 8:58; 17:5, 24
4. THE WORD IS...
OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING) (January 25)
 - a. Jesus has supernatural knowledge that only God can possess.
 - b. 1:48; 2:4, 19, 23–25; 3:14; 4:17–18; 6:51, 70; 8:28; 9:3; 10:15, 17–18; 11:4, 14; 12:24, 32; 13:10–11, 38; 21:18–19
5. THE WORD IS...
THE MESSIAH AND SON OF GOD (February 1)
 - a. Jesus is the promised Messiah and Son of God prophesied in Old Testament.
 - b. 1:36, 41, 49; 3:18; 4:25, 29; 5:25; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 9:22; 10:24, 36; 11:4, 27; 12:34; 19:7; 20:30–31
6. THE WORD IS...
THE "I AM" (February 8)
 - a. Jesus is the "I AM" from the Old Testament. He is Yahweh/Jehovah.
 - b. 4:26; 6:20, 35, 48, 51; 8:12, 18, 24, 28, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 13:19; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5–6 (cf. Ex. 3:14–15; Isa. 41:4; 43:10–13, 25; 45:18; 51:12; 52:6)
7. THE WORD IS...
THE SON WHO WAS SENT BY AND REFLECTS THE FATHER (February 15)
 - a. Jesus was sent by God and reflects the very essence of the Father.
 - b. 3:17, 35–36; 5:19–26; 6:40; 8:35–36; 14:13; 17:1
8. THE WORD IS...
THE FULFILLMENT OF JEWISH FESTIVALS/INSTITUTIONS (February 22)
 - a. Jesus fulfills the Jewish festivals and institutions found in the Law (even the temple itself).
 - b. 1:29, 36; 2:14–22, esp. v. 21; 4:23–24; 8:12; 9:5; 19:14
9. THE WORD IS...
THE GIVER OF ETERNAL LIFE (March 1)
 - a. Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.
 - b. 1:4; 3:15–16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39–40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47–48, 51, 53–54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2–3; 20:31

10. THE WORD IS...

A MIRACLE WORKER (March 8)

- a. Jesus performs signs and wonders that demonstrate that He is the promised Messiah.
- b. 2:1–11, 13–22; 4:46–54; 5:1–15; 6:1–15; 9:1–41; 11:1–44

11. THE WORD IS...

TESTIFIED BY OTHERS TO BE THE MESSIAH (March 15)

- a. Witnesses testify that Jesus is the Messiah.
- b. 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32, 34; 3:11, 32–33; 4:39; 5:31–39; 8:14, 18; 10:25; 15:26–27; 18:37; 19:35; 21:24

12. THE WORD IS...

UNIFIED WITH FATHER AND SPIRIT IN THEIR WORK OF REVELATION AND REDEMPTION (March 22)

- a. Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work.
- b. 14:17–18, 23, 26; 15:26; 20:21–22

13. THE WORD IS...

THE BASIS OF SALVATION (March 29)

- a. It is by Jesus' death that God brings His people salvation.
 - i. 1:29; 3:14–15; 6:51–58; 10:15; 11:50–52; 12:24; 15:13
- b. God is sovereign in salvation.
 - i. 3:21; 5:21; 6:37–45, 64–65; 10:16, 26–30; 15:16; 17:2, 6, 9

14. BELIEVERS MUST...

CONFESS AND BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH (April 12)

- a. Salvation is obtained by believing in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God.
 - i. 1:12; 3:15, 16; 5:24; 6:29, 35; 8:24; 11:25–27, 42; 12:44; 17:8, 21; 20:31
- b. The benefits of salvation can be experienced here and now (in this evil age), but will be fully known when He returns.
 - i. 3:18, 36; 4:23; 5:24; 6:39–40; 10:10, 26–29; 11:25–26

15. BELIEVERS MUST...

CONTINUE JESUS' WORK AND MISSION (April 19)

- a. Believers are called upon to continue the work of the Savior in order that all men may know and be saved.
- b. 4:38; 15:16; 17:18; 20:21–22

16. CONCLUSION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (April 26)